THE BIBLE SPEAKS

International Uniform Sunday School Lessons

BY DR. KENNETH J. FOREMAN

Scripture: Job 38--42.
Devotional Reading: John 14:1-11.

Man's Questions

Lesson for October 10, 1954

TO MAN'S eternal questioning there is an answer; but it is not the kind of answer that man expects. For the tremendous problem of evil, the questions that are forced on us when we see the triumph of good over evil anywhere, when like Job we or those we love are racked by calamities not of our making,—for these problems and these questions what we think we want is some answer all written out clear and smooth. We want all the whys and the wherefores answered so that we have no further questions to ask. But God does not respond to this demand. He did not give Job what Job kept shouting for—an explanation. So far as we know, Job never did find out the real reason why God had allowed these troubles to descend on him. But his mind and heart were satisfied all the same.

Dr. Foreman

God Does Not Answer

From time to time, all through the long, brilliant, dead-end argument Job has with his friends, Job breaks off the line of his thought to wish that he could once speak to God, face to face. These well-meaning, stupid friends of his have no answer to life's riddle. They have one, but it is like a rusty key that fits no lock. All they can say (though they repeat it again and again with poetic power) is that suffering is caused by sin, period. Job knows this does not fit his case, not the way they think. So he feels almost as if he were talking into a well. There is nothing but hollow darkness—and he wants God. Well, God at last comes down in the terrifying majesty of a great storm. Job dares not look; but there comes out of the whirlwind a voice of thunder,—not bringing answers but asking questions. Job is beaten in the face with a wind of questions to which he has no answer at all. In the midst of it Job begs God to stop, but God will not stop. Many of the questions which are asked of Job science now can answer; but some remain without answer to this day. One lasting message of these last pages of Job is that this universe is woven with mystery from top to bottom. We do not understand the simple things around us. Why must we expect the answers to the difficult questions before we can settle the simpler problems? If the presence of evil be a mystery, and to a large degree it is, it is only one great question in a universe crowded with questions.

God Has the Answers

There is one point Job reaches in his final faith, which was not in his first faith. For the story of Job is about a man who began with a faith which was real but untested, and came through storm and stress to a better faith, better because wiser, better because tested in the tempest. He began with believing that God ought to explain to him all that God was doing. He ends with a faith that has given up that claim. God does not answer him and yet he is satisfied. How could this be? It is clear that Job did not think that God is puzzled by his own universe. God's wisdom is infinite. Job believed that the universe "makes sense" to God, since it is His. The change in Job's thinking was just here: At first he thought God ought to tell us what he knows. At the last Job realizes that God does not have to tell us all he knows, and will not.

God Is the Answer

Nevertheless Job's cry for light did not go without response. For he learned that in every darkness God is the light. God himself is the answer. He learned that the right question to ask in the presence of life's tragedies is not always "Why is this?" but rather, "How may I meet it?" Explaining life is less vital than bravely bearing life. In a storm at sea the passengers and even the crew may be in greatest distress. They may not know where the storm came from, nor how much of the ocean is swept by it, they may have no notion of where land is; but they do not mob the bridge demanding a weather map and a lecture on meteorology. They have confidence in the captain. An ounce of confidence is worth a ton of explanations. So it is on the voyage of life. We are all passengers across an unplumbed sea, whose winds we cannot chart and whose storms are not made to our order. But God is the Captain. Knowing he is near, we are content to ask fewer questions.

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Clover Hill Personals

Clover Hill, Oct. 5.- Mrs. T. H. Trent was hostess on Tuesday of last week at a quilting party. Present were Mesdames Otway and Jack Martin, S. B. Kidd, L. W. Carter, Jacob Lewis, Bill Stanley and Robert Gilbert. A bountiful dinner was served.

Mr. J. P. Johnson is on the sick list. He was visited on Saturday evening by Mr. and Mrs. Roy Keys and daughter.

Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Johnson Jr. and Garland Johnson attended the Richmond Fair on Saturday, and spent the night with their brother and sister-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Johnson, of Ashland.

Mr. and Mrs. Jake Smith, of Ashland spent the week-end with Mr. and Mrs. James Gowin and were dinner guests Saturday of Mr. and Mrs. F. P. O'Brien.

Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Torrence and Mr. and Mrs. J. V. Torrence and son, Jimmy spent the week-end with Mr. A. B. Torrence, of Elkton.

Miss June Carol Conner won second place in the dress revue at the Farmville Fair and also at the Lynchburg Farm Show. At Farmville she also won second prize for her coconut cake and third prize on a skirt she made.

Freddie Mitchell was another winner. He placed second on his Holstein calf and third on showmanship at Farmville and fourth at Lynchburg.

Misses Betty Mitchell and Alice Ashworth visited at Lynchburg College Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. D. E. Torrence and Mr. and Mrs. Allen Torrence and son motored to Raleigh, N. C. Saturday to visit relatives. They plan to return Wednesday.

Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Hanenkrat had as their guests last week Mr. Hanenkrat's niece, Mrs. Harold Babcock and husband, of Waynesfield Ohio, and the Rev. and Mrs. Robert Doverspike, of Johnstown, Pa.

The Clover Hill Home Demonstration Club will hold its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday evening, October 12, at 7:30, in the home of Mrs. Ethel Lee Stanley, with Mrs. Jessie Carwile as co-hostess. The demonstration on "Remodeling Clothing" will be given by Mrs. J. L. Torrence. All members are asked to bring one garment which they wish to remodel.

Mesdames T. M. and Bernard Richardson attended the Associational meeting of the W. M. U. at Spring Creek Baptist Church last Tuesday evening.

Mr. and Mrs. Otway Martin and family were dinner guests Sunday evening of Mr. and Mrs. Berkley Ferguson.

Mr. Ben Wheeler spent Saturday with a party fishing on the Chesapeake Bay.

Guests at Locust Grove, home of Mrs. William Pitzer Gills over the week-end were Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Conner, of Halifax; Mrs. Banks Frazier and children, of Kenbridge; Miss Lucy O'Brien, of Lynchburg, and Mrs. Mary Copenhaver, of Richmond.

Vera

Vera, Oct. 4.- October is giving us real summer weather, and it is so dry. Everyone is wishing for rain.

Mrs. T. C. Harvey and Mazie and Harriette visited in the home of Mrs. Sadie Covington on Friday.

Mrs. J. P. Leitner entertained the W. M. U. Society of New Hope Church at an all-day meeting on Thursday. Everyone enjoyed the day.

Guests in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Grover Beasley on Saturday night were Mr. and Mrs. L. H. Watson, Mr. and Mrs. T. C. Harvey Mazie and Harriette.

We are glad that Mrs. Sadie Covington, who has been on the sick list, is feeling much better.

Mrs. T. C. Harvey, Mazie and Harriette visited in the home of Mrs. Lester Harvey on Saturday.

Miss Dorothy Beasley visited her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Grover Beasley for the week-end.

Mr. T. C. Harvey and family visited Miss Mae Harvey in Lynchburg Sunday. She continues ill.

Miss Louise Covington visited her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Walker Covington for the week-end.

Alben Barkley making strong bid for election to the U. S. Senate in Kentucky.

Preliminary accord reached on giving sovereignty to West Germany.

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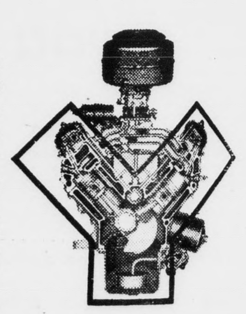

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No. 32 of a series

THERE IS opportunity For YOU in APPOMATTOX - *a growing town*

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Appomattox welcomes you. Proud of its record as a "Growing Town," Appomattox has opportunity for YOU. As the natural job center and trade center of a large area in Central Virginia, Appomattox keeps out the welcome mat, and wants you to feel at home. You are doing business with friends when you do business in Appomattox. You will like our courteous service.

You will find a great variety of services available in Appomattox. For example, we are exceedingly proud of our automotive services. New car sales, new truck sales, a live used car market, new and used trucks are featured by our enterprising dealers and when it comes to service, there just isn't any better place to go. Our oil companies, service stations and repair shops invite you.

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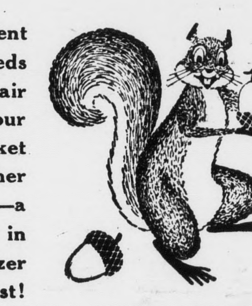
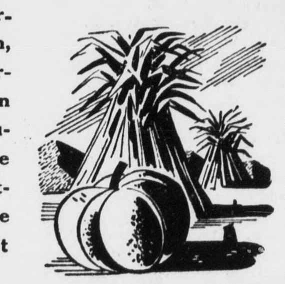


A sign of a growing town is its civic clubs and organizations. Join the P.-T. A.! If you are a veteran, the Legion wants you! Attend the churches, and participate in their programs! Help make Our Town the Best! Best in business, in religious life, in educational opportunity, in civic pride. There is a place for YOU here . . . and the progressive firms listed below urge you to join hands to boost your home community. Call on these firms for the excellent services they have to offer.



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